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<Why didn't you tell me that?>
<What no one told me about marriage>

by <Andy Traub>

Why didn't you tell me that? What no one told me about marriage./

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Foreword

Written by Andy Andrews

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Chapter Two: Can I see your ID please?

Being qualified to write a book on marriage

No offense to the priests reading this book but how in the heck can a person give advice on marriage without being married? Many people without children roll their eyes when they see a young child losing their patience in public. On the other hand fellow parents often express empathy because we get it. Kids do crazy stuff and sometimes they do it in public. Giving advice on marriage without ever having the joy, privilege and responsibility of being married is a waste of everyone's time. This book will help you in your marriage because I've stormed

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out of my house during an argument, struggled to get my wife pregnant, haven't learned how to put dirty clothes in the hamper after 6 years of marriage and I still feel like a lousy husband when our bank account dips below \$2,000.

Sub-Section

The wisdom of other couples helps us jump forward in knowledge

The wisdom of other couples helps us jump forward in knowledge

There is no wisdom and no reward for going at it alone in marriage. That is true as it relates to you and your spouse going it alone as individuals and as you as a couple going it alone. You need help. You've never been married before and if you have been married before then you're on your second, third or fourth marriage. Either you're a marriage freshman or your prior marriages weren't successful. That may sound like "your prior marriages weren't successful" but it's true. Successful marriages don't end, they thrive. Successful marriages also don't survive, they thrive. There is no reward for dying

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married. The reward of marriage is living life better together than apart. To have a thriving marriage you need help and you'll always need help. You're not stupid or weak for admitting you need help. You're certainly not a failure for admitting you need help. You're more likely to succeed when you admit your abilities (or lack there of). Help is available and it comes most often in the form of other couples.

Who will help me?

Don't ask your pastor for marriage help. "Huh? Don't ask my pastor?" Yeah, he's got enough to worry about. If you really want to get long term help in having a great marriage then ask your pastor for a couple in the church you can ask for help from but leave him out of it. Some pastors may disagree with me but I think pastors should do less better than more worse and it's impossible to partner with every married couple in their church to help them maintain a healthy relationship. Here are some tips on finding a couple to partner with.

Start with your friends. It can be awkward to ask a stranger to be your "marriage mentor" and frankly their marriage may be very different than it really looks. How many of us show the true state of our marriage in public? In reality we put on

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our smiley faces when people ask "How are you doing?". It's just too much work or too humbling to say, "Well, my kids didn't sleep well so I woke up cranky and my wife made me even more mad because she made me make breakfast for the kids, which I stink and and then she yelled at me for making a lousy breakfast."

When's the last time you said that? A good test to find someone who would be a good mentor is to think of someone you know who compliments their spouse in public. If they compliment their spouse when they're not present that's even better. You should be doing that too by the way. Don't feel pressure to pick a couple today, just start a mental list of couples that you respect. If they leave nearby that's great but they don't have to.

They should be an "older" match. They're likely to be older in years but also older in life stage. If you have a young family then look for a couple that has kids older than yours. It's even a good idea to look for a couple with the same number of kids as you have or a couple whose kids are spaced like yours are. My wife and I have three kids right now. Samuel is 3 and a 1/2 (not three, 3 and 1/2!), Caroline is 2 and Lucy is 6 weeks old. We deal with a lot of poop and high chairs. Our kids are close and young. Our mentor couple has kids who are also close

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in age but their kids are in middle school.

Look for someone with a great marriage first, good parenting second. Your relationship started before you had children. Your marriage likely started before you were parents. This couple will help you see the importance of putting your marriage before your children. There is no such thing as a great marriage where the children act as the glue of the relationship. If your marriage only serves as a way for you to raise your children then you're missing out on the marriage God wants you to have. You're also not giving your kids what they need. When you neglect your marriage and put that energy only towards your children they don't get to see a marriage they can model. They see two people raising children not a couple in love who also happen to be raising children. Your mentor couple should have this figured out by now and they should model that behavior for you.

They have to tell the truth. Your best friend is the one who tells you the most truth. That's why your spouse is your best friend in many ways and it's why you get mad at them so often. They tell you the truth because they see your actions more than anyone and those actions affect them. I hate it when

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my wife points out my faults because I know she's right. Your mentor couple should love you enough to tell you the truth. If you're being selfish then one of them should tell you that you're being selfish. A great mentor couple is also a bit unpredictable. More often the husband does not take my side when we are explaining a disagreement. He knows my tricks because he's a guy so he is well equipped to understand my point of view and the fault in it. Don't expect your gender to back you up when you're wrong, sorry.

Balanced people. They should be balanced in grace and truth. Let's say you're having an argument and you want the mentor couple help you unpack it so you can avoid similar arguments in the future. They should help you understand your feelings, the root of the argument and encourage you to solve the issue in practical ways. They should do all this in a kind manner. I need people to shoot me straight. I can talk my way out of most situations so I need my mentor couple to be very direct with me. That's the "truth" part. My wife needs more "grace". She needs you to be gentle when you're delivering the truth. If the truth is "you're wrong" then grace is "it's not permanent". Truth is what we know and grace is how we should handle the truth. The alternative to a balanced approach to

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grace and truth is condemnation with no hope (truth but no grace) or freedom without consequence (grace but no truth). Your mentor couple has the difficult job of telling you the truth without making you feel hopeless. When you walk away from meeting with your mentors you should feel conviction about your personal actions and optimistic about the future. That's a balanced approach to grace and truth.

How often should you meet with your mentors?

My wife and I meet with our mentors when we have to. We see them socially as well but we only meet with them when we've hit a slump and can't seem to pull each other out of it. Sometimes neither of you are healthy enough to be a part of the solution. Stop the madness and call for help.

Meeting regularly is also a great option. The two greatest things you can do to maintain your car are also dirt cheap. Wash your car and get the oil changed on schedule. Washing it keeps it free of dirt which can lead to corrosion of important components. Changing the oil keeps the engine in good condition because that fresh oil helps the engine reduce friction. Your \$20,000 investment needs you to spend \$30 on it every two months and it'll last a long, long time. Your marriage mentor is like the oil change. It can be inconvenient to stop your day to day

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routine to get your levels checked and it might even cost you some money (it's always a good idea to pay the dinner bill if you go out with your couple). The question to ask is not how much it costs you to maintain your relationship. You should ask yourself how much it costs for you to NOT maintain your relationship. I'd empty my bank account in a second if it meant I could be in a better place with my wife. It's not what it costs to maintain something that you should worry about. You should be concerned with the expense of a broken relationship not the maintenance costs. It's always cheaper to maintain than fix.

Go out of your way to make the meeting work for your mentors and then pay special attention to where you meet.

Where should we meet?

If you know you've got some heavy stuff to discuss then skip the restaurant and have your mentor's over for pizza. Don't make your wife cook dinner either guys. The goal is to minimize friction and if you're having some then making her cook dinner might not help the equation. Just keep it simple and allow space for conversation versus entertaining your guests. They aren't there to be entertained, they're there to help you. That requires space for conversation. Meeting in public can work if

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you're confident no one is going to get too emotional. This is really more of a work session than a meal so put yourself in a place where you can get work done. We often meet our mentor couple at their home because it's convenient for them and it's neutral ground for my wife and I.

Who starts?

Our mentor couple is really good about jumping in and starting our discussions. They keep it simple. "So, how are things going?" "What can we help with guys?" "What'd you do wrong now Andy?" All of these are very common phrases we hear from them. Just remember that it's a work session so get past the chit chat and get to work.

When establishing the mentor relationship permission should be given to the mentors to shut the chatty spouse up. That's me. The chatty spouse is the one who will try to spin things to their advantage and is usually the worst listener of the couple. If you're the chatty spouse then make extra effort to listen twice as much as you speak. Keep track of time if you have to in order to keep this ratio. It's vital that you are there to learn instead of defend yourself. Marriage is a team sport and if you're just there to be right then you're in the wrong place.

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**Observing and either repeating or not repeating
the behavior of our parents**

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Chapter Three: Break up while you still can

**Marriage is meant to be forever so be sure and
then don't quit.**

Sub-Section

If you're not sure then quit and move on

Shame, money and regret aren't that bad.

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Chapter Four: Talk to rich people about rich livin

**How do they talk about each other when the other
isn't around?**

How do their children behave towards other adults and their
own parents?

Are they honest about their struggles?

Do they embrace their roles

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Marriage maintenance / being intentional

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Chapter Five: You don't live with the enemy

Weekend to Remember

You chose them so don't hate them

The premise of marriage is a choice of one person over all others so why do we make this person our enemy?

It's obvious

When we start thinking the worst of our spouse (their words and actions)

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Chapter Six: It's time to die

There's a new #1

Every day of your life you woke up and the most important person was you...no longer.

Live by dying

Dying is the way to live life to its fullest. "If you want to gain your life you must lose it." (Find verse)

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Chapter Seven: It's time to live

Not different, new

Eat

Who you relate to (married vs. single)

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Chapter Eight: New eyes

People, places, things

How you watch movies (sex scenes are total B.S. And divorce isn't fodder for jokes, it's toxic).

Sweet, less guilt

Less guilt about all things sexual.

They're not an option so don't shop

You can't look at the opposite gender the same way anymore because they're not an option.

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Chapter Nine: Count on money (screwing up your marriage)

No more "mine"

Make a big pile

Take one for the team

Take their debt

Agree on two numbers

Agree on two numbers before every number becomes a fight.

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Cost per purchase and total spent each month

Birth and mortgages

Your marriage is your baby so don't have a baby or a house
your first year

Let Dave do it.

Don't try to teach each other about money, let Dave Ramsey
do it.

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Chapter Ten: Keep acting like there's no ring

Best behavior

Keep serving one another

Be exclusive in every way

Be exclusive in who you talk to and spend time with. Leave NO gray area. The question to ask is "Is this a wise decision?" NOT "Can I do this?" Not all things that are permissible are beneficial." - FIND VERSE

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Keep surprising each other

Keep surprising each other - You worked to earn it and it worked. Keep earning it. "Earn this" from war movie.

Trophies are admired, plants are cared for. Treat each other like plants, not trophies.

Keep dating

Do it every week and make it sacred but expensive.

Get away, far away

Take vacations/breaks

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Chapter Eleven: Don't try to eliminate conflict

When you fight pay attention to how they fight

Discover how their parents' fought

We learn how to fight from our parents.

Heal the hurt to halt the anger

Anger comes from being hurt so find the hurt and you'll
heal with the anger.

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Chapter Twelve: Voldemort

Don't use it

Don't say it.

What is really is

It's trading temporary for permanent problems. It's not a solution, it's a bigger problem. It's like cracking your skull because you sprained your wrist. Sprains are painful, internal, last a long time, require attention, are common, won't kill you but do affect your daily life for a time. Cracking your skull / brain injury is a deeper injury that costs much more in regards to quality of life and money. It's also impossible to hide a skull injury. Others will undoubtedly be affected by it. It

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takes a lot of people to manage it. It can become unmanageable.

No one would sign up for one if they knew how much damage it

really did.

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Chapter Thirteen: There are three of you

Don't be a liar

You made a promise to each other, your friends and family
and God

The only way to fix your spouse

Ask God to help you be a better person before you ask Him
to change your spouse

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Pray for your spouse when you don't want to

Praying for them when you're happy with them is like paying someone back what they owe you..not that noble or difficult.

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Chapter Fourteen: Principles

Praying and anger are oil and water

Love and Respect

The Five Love Languages